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THE INVINCIBLE RED CONJUA



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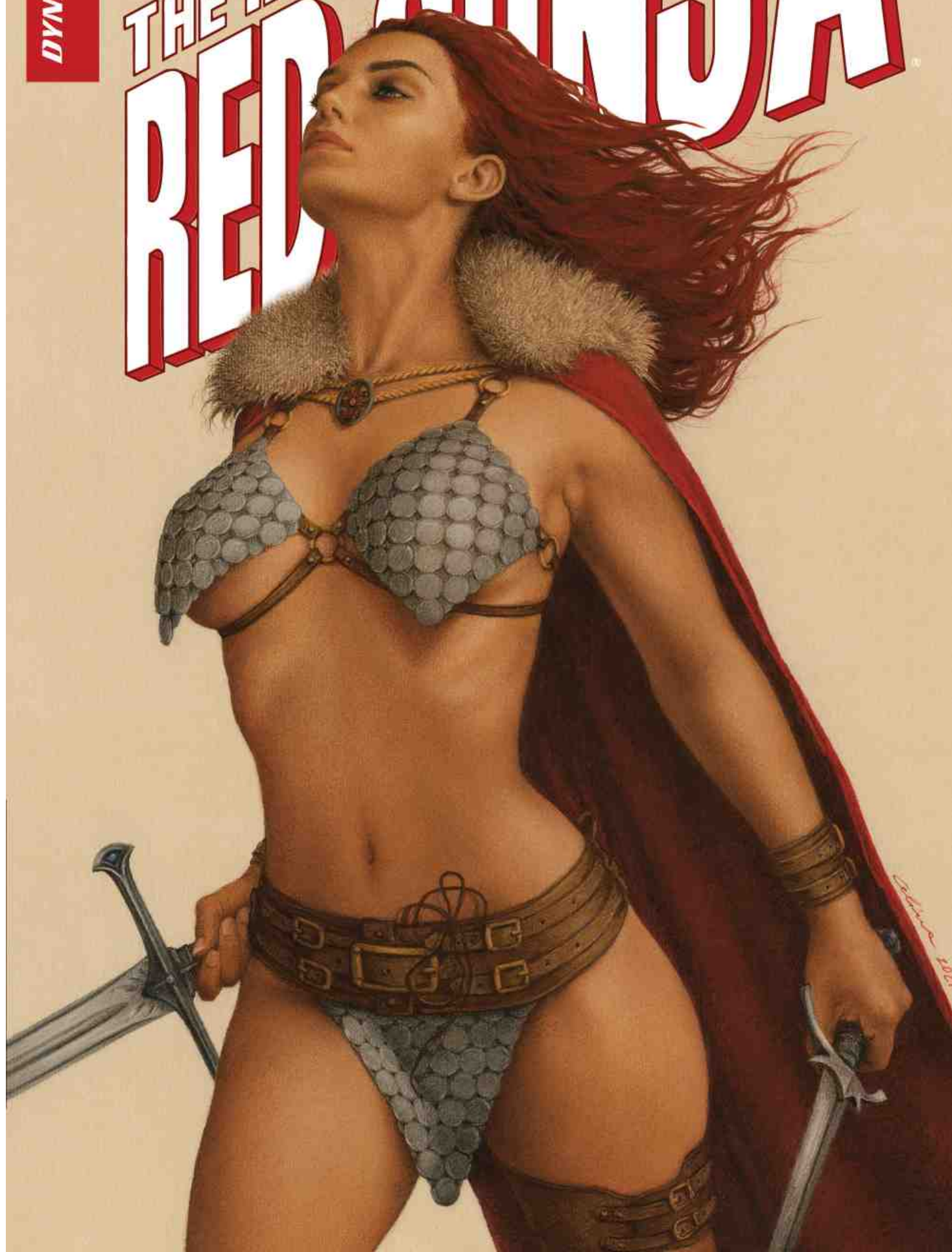
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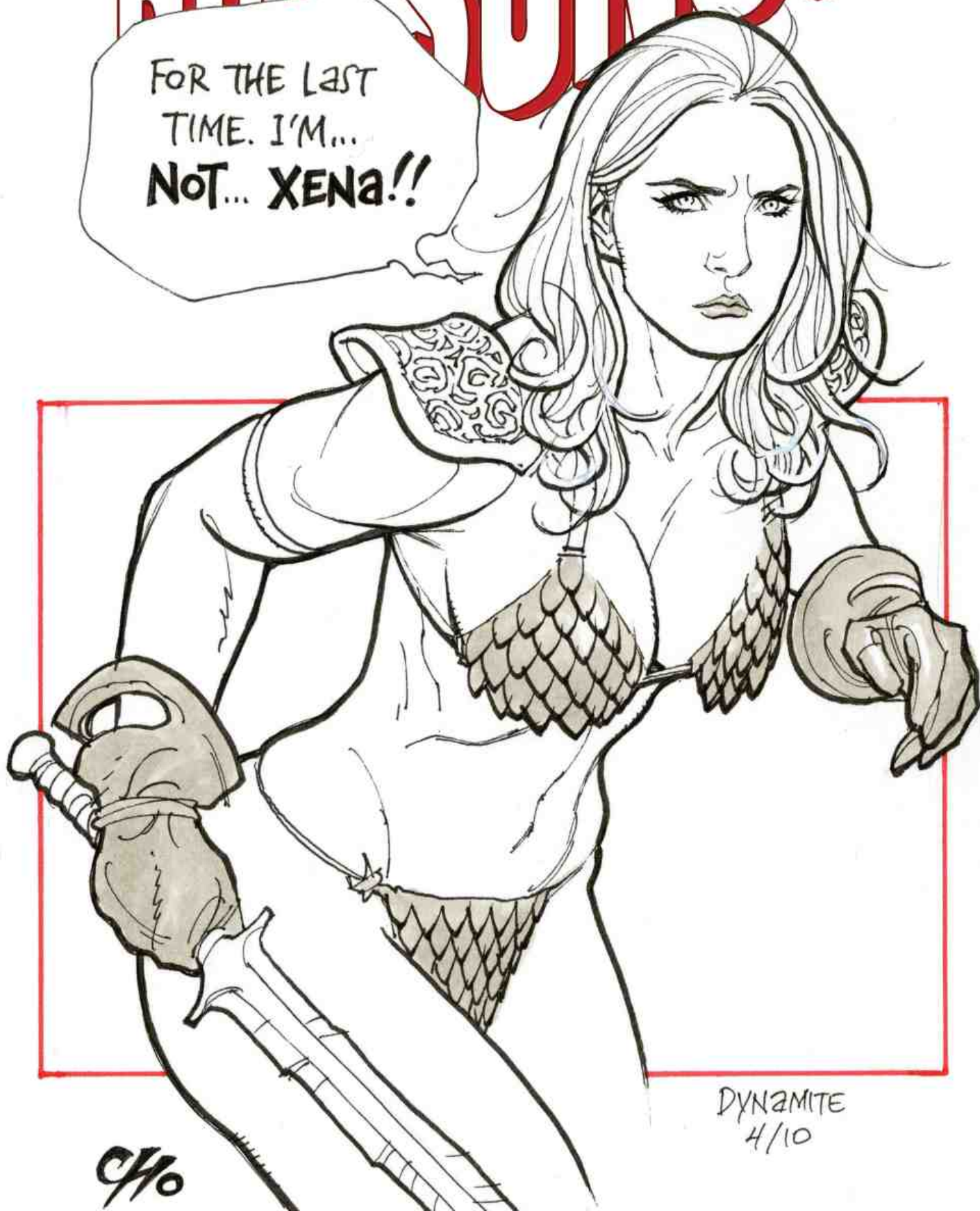


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FOR THE LAST
TIME. I'M...
NOT... XENA!!



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THE INVINCIBLE RED SONJUA



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**SPECIAL THANKS TO
CASEY SILVER**

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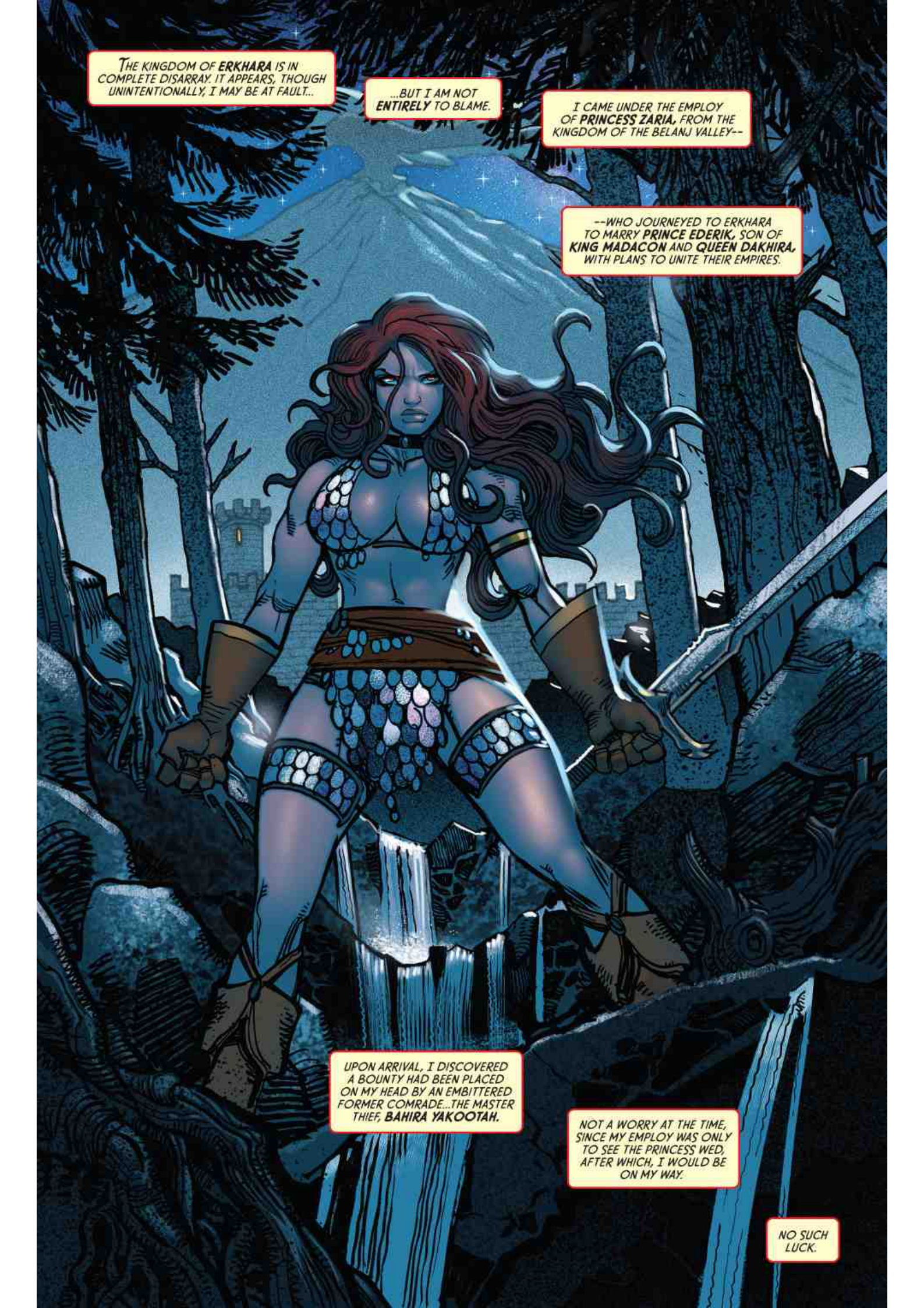


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THE KINGDOM OF **ERKHARA** IS IN COMPLETE DISARRAY. IT APPEARS, THOUGH UNINTENTIONALLY, I MAY BE AT FAULT...

...BUT I AM NOT ENTIRELY TO BLAME.

I CAME UNDER THE EMPLOY OF **PRINCESS ZARIA**, FROM THE KINGDOM OF THE **BELANJ VALLEY**--

--WHO JOURNEYED TO **ERKHARA** TO MARRY **PRINCE EDERIK**, SON OF **KING MADACON** AND **QUEEN DAKHIRA**, WITH PLANS TO UNITE THEIR EMPIRES.

UPON ARRIVAL, I DISCOVERED A BOUNTY HAD BEEN PLACED ON MY HEAD BY AN EMBITTERED FORMER COMRADE...THE MASTER THIEF, **BAHIRA YAKOOTAH**.

NOT A WORRY AT THE TIME, SINCE MY EMPLOY WAS ONLY TO SEE THE PRINCESS WED, AFTER WHICH, I WOULD BE ON MY WAY.

NO SUCH LUCK.

AS PART OF THE RITUAL, AN ANCESTRAL CROWN OF GREAT SIGNIFICANCE, MUST BE WORN BY THE YOUNG BRIDE IN ORDER TO SOLIDIFY THE NUPTIALS.

THIS PRECIOUS CROWN WAS ENTRUSTED TO THE KING'S SORCERER, **BRELAQ**, FOR SAFEKEEPING.

ALAS, IN SPITE OF THE FORMIDABLE SAFEGUARDS, THE CROWN WAS STOLEN. BRELAQ PLACED A LARGE BOUNTY FOR ITS SAFE RETURN...AND FOR THE HEAD OF THE THIEF IN QUESTION.

ALWAYS KEEN FOR A GOOD BOUNTY, I SET OUT TO FIND IT.

WITH THE HELP OF BRELAQ'S LOYAL WARD **TUMA**, I FOUND BOTH THE THIEF AND **BAHIRA YAKOOTAH** IN THE MIDST OF MAKING A DEAL:

THE **SLAYING** OF KING **MADACON** IN EXCHANGE FOR THE **STOLEN CROWN**.

THIS PLAN IS RICKETY. WE HAVE NO IDEA WHAT DEFENSES HE HAS.

HE HAS NO ARMY. HIS **ILLUSIONS** ARE HIS ONLY DEFENSE.

I HEAR HE DRUGS THE WINE AT COURT AFORE HIS MAGICAL DISPLAY, AS TO TRICK PEOPLE INTO BELIEVING HE CONJURES **DEMONS**.

I SAW HIM TURN A **SLAVE GIRL** INTO A **GOAT** ONCE.

DID YOU REALLY? ARE YOU **SURE**?

YOU CALLING ME A LIAR?!

SILENCE!

SOMEONE AHEAD.

IT APPEARS TO BE PRINCESS **ZARIA**'S CURSED PROTECTOR, **SONJA**.

AND SHE LOOKS TO BE ALONE.

LUCKY US!

VERY STUPID.

QUIT SLAVERING, YOU LECHEROUS DOGS...

...ADVANCE!



AS THE MASKED THIEF DEPARTED, I CONFRONTED HIM. AS A MATTER OF COURSE, HIS **SEVERED HEAD** WOUND UP IN MY **SATCHEL**.

UPON RETURN TO THE KING'S COURT, I DELIVERED THE FANCILY CLAD HEAD AND SOUGHT TO RETRIEVE MY BOUNTY.

WHAT I KNEW NOT AT THE TIME WAS THIS:

THE THIEF WAS **NAIJEL**, THE SON OF THE VERY MAN WHO PLACED A BOUNTY ON HIS HEAD...THE WIZARD **BRELAQ**.



BRELAQ WENT **MAD** WITH GRIEF AND SENT THE KING TO AN **ASHEN DEATH**. THE DESPONDENT QUEEN **DAKHIRA** AND PRINCE **EDERIK** SWORE TO AVENGE THEIR LOST KING.

KING GERROD, OF A NEIGHBORING KINGDOM, PLEDGED HIS ALLEGIANCE, ALONG WITH HIS ARMY.



AS IF THE MAYHEM WROUGHT BY BRELAQ WAS NOT ENOUGH, **MOLTEN MONSTERS**, CONJURED BY **BAHIRA** TO SLAY THE KING, CRASHED THROUGH THE PALACE FLOORS. THE PALACE BEGAN TO CRUMBLE.



THE WINGED **TUMA** ESCAPED WITH THE PRINCESS, THE QUEEN AND **EDERIK**, AS I WAS FORCED TO DEAL WITH THE WIZARD ON MY OWN.

IT DID NOT GO WELL.



THE WIZARD CAST A **DEVIOUS ENSORCELLMENT** ON ME.

I WAS TO DO HIS EVERY BIDDING.

TO BE HIS UNWILLING SLAVE.

TO FIGHT OFF THE KING'S ARMY AS WELL AS KING **GERROD'S** FORCES.



TWO ARMIES AND A CRAZED WIZARD, HELLBENT ON DESTROYING ONE ANOTHER, AND BETWIXT ALL...

...ME, THE INVINCIBLE WARRIOR.



SO HERE
I AM, NOW.



BRELAQ'S WICKED SPELL HAS,
AS WELL, RENDERED ME ABLE
TO QUICKLY HEAL FROM ANY
LETHAL WOUND.



A-AAGHH

SHHH-SHKK



N-NN-
GHHAAAAAH

SHHH-SHKK

TO NEVER TASTE THE
SWEET KISS OF DEATH
AND BE RELEASED
FROM THIS ANGUISH.

TO CARRY ON FIGHTING,
AND PROTECT THE ONE FIEND
WHOM I WISH MORE THAN
ANYTHING TO DIE BY MY
VERY OWN HANDS.

THIS KINGDOM IS AS
CURSED AS I AM.



MANY YEARS AGO...

SO, BRELAQ,
WITH YOUR HELP, WE
HAVE DEFEATED
ANOTHER ARMY AND
GAINED ANOTHER
KINGDOM.

HOW
DOES IT
FEEL?

MY KING, I FEEL
SATISFIED, BUT **FATIGUED**.
I'VE SLEPT NAUGHT IN THREE
DAYS, AND MY **SORCERY** CAN
ONLY DO **SO MUCH** IN MY
WEAKENED STATE.

I NOTICED
THIS, BUT YOU
MANAGED TO
DO FINE.

FOR
THAT I AM
GRATEFUL.

I AM
HUMBLED,
MY KING. YOUR
FAVOR GIVES ME
STRENGTH.

THE INVINCIBLE RED SONJA

JIMMY PALMIOTTI &
AMANDA CONNER: WRITERS
MORITAT: ART

FIVE

MATT CARTER: COLORS
DAVE SHARPE: LETTERS
MATT IDELSON: EDITS







THE CROWN **MATTERS**
NOT RIGHT NOW!

THE WIZARD BRELAQ
HAS **SLAUGHTERED** THE KING. HE'S
RENDERED **MY GUARDIAN** HIS **SLAVE**,
AND INTENDS TO **DESTROY** THE
ENTIRE KINGDOM.

AT THIS
VERY MOMENT, WHAT
IS **LEFT** OF THE KING'S ARMY
AND KING GERROD'S MEN ARE
TO STORM BRELAQ'S TOWER
TO **KILL** THEM **BOTH**.



YOU KNOW BETTER
THAN **MOST** WHAT THE WIZARD
BRELAQ IS CAPABLE OF. THOSE
ARMIES WILL STAND **NAUGHT**
A **CHANCE** AGAINST HIS
MAGIC.

I FEAR OUT OF
ANGER AND SPITE, BRELAQ WILL
DO **EVERYTHING** IN HIS **POWER**
TO BRING THE CITY TO **RUINS** IN
THE PROCESS.

YOU SAY **HE**
KILLED THE KING
PERSONALLY?

EVERYONE
WAS WITNESS TO
HIS ATTACK.



AH, EDERIK,
I AM **TRULY**
SORRY TO HEAR
OF YOUR FATHER'S
PASSING.



BUT,
OBVIOUSLY,
THIS TRAGEDY HAS
NOTHING TO DO
WITH ME, SO...

...TIME FOR
YOU **BOTH**
TO GO.



BAHIRA, THIS IS
YOUR CITY AS WELL AS
MINE! YOU, TOO, MAY
LOSE **EVERYTHING**--

EDERIK, FORGET
THIS **NE'ER-DO-WELL** AND
LET'S FIND SOMEONE WHO CAN
ACTUALLY HELP **SONJA**
BREAK HER **SPELL**.



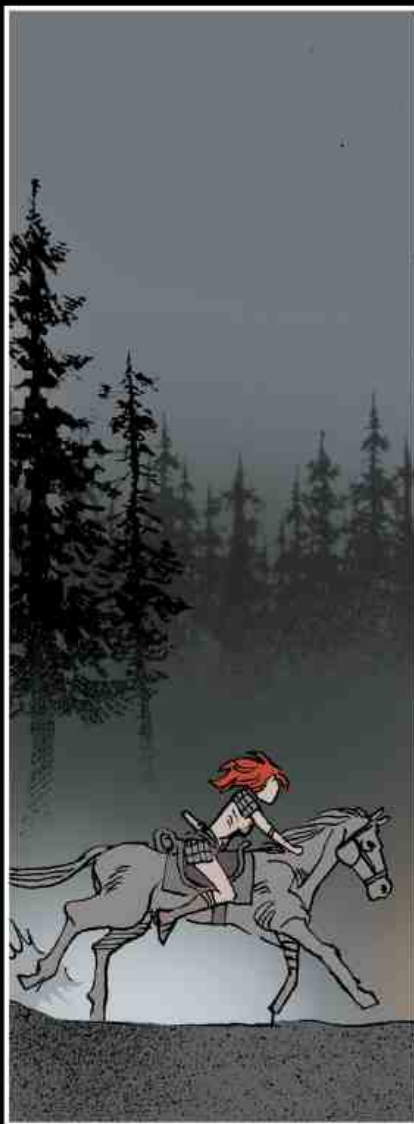
WAIT--

SONJA?
RED SONJA?

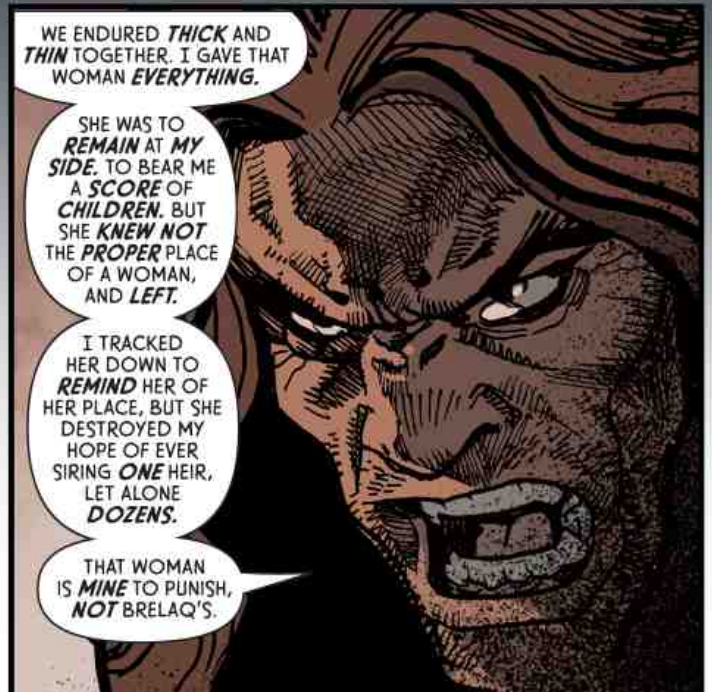














WIZARD...!

WIZARD!



YOU
COWARDLY SON
OF A MANGY
CUR...

...WE WILL HAVE
WORDS...

NOW!

I'LL **NOT** SLAY
ONE GUARDSMAN
MORE IN YOUR
NAME!



BE **STAIID**,
HOTHEAD.

I...
CANNOT...
MOVE...

HOW
ARE YOU SO
STUBBORN?

THE SPELL
I CAST UPON YOU
IS UNSHATTERABLE,
YET YOU CONTINUE
TO RESIST.

YOU
MAY COME
CLOSER.



I...
SHALL...
KILL...

YOU
SHALL **DO**
AS I **SAY.**

YOUR STENCH
IS **UNBEARABLE**. GO
WASH YOURSELF AND
PREPARE FOR YOUR
NEXT BATTLE.



HERE, TAKE
YOUR TRINKET AND
GET MARRIED. CONSIDER
IT A WEDDING GIFT, FOR
OLD TIME'S SAKE.

WHAT?
JUST LIKE
THAT?



THE **PINNACLE** OF BEING A MASTER THIEF IS THE **EXECUTION** OF THE THEFT.

AFTER THAT, THE EXCITEMENT SWIFTLY DEPARTS, AND LEAVES ONE LOOKING FOR A **NEW CHALLENGE**.



'TIS **GREATER** THAN A CROWN, OR A PERSONAL QUARREL. **ALL** OF **ERKHARA** IS AT RISK. DO YOU NOT **SEE**?

I SEE MUCH MORE THAN YOU KNOW, PRINCESS, BUT **SETTLING** MY **SCORE** IS WHAT MATTERS TO ME.



THEN I WILL BE COMING ALONG TO SETTLE **MY** SCORE WITH THE MAN WHO KILLED MY FATHER. IT IS **MY DUTY** AS HIS **SON**.

EDERIK, DO WHAT YOU **MUST**. FOLLOW ME IF YOU LIKE, BUT **STAY** OUT OF MY **WAY**.



SO, **BAHIRA**...

WILL YOU BE ABLE TO BREAK SONJA'S **CURSED SPELL**, THEN?

I LEARNED FROM THE **BEST**.

'TIS WHAT HAPPENS **AFTER** THAT I'M MORE INTERESTED IN.





"FRET **NOT**, BLOODHAIR. YOUR VOICE WILL COME BACK IN TIME."

"NOW, **OUTSIDE** WITH YOU. STAND GUARD. I HAVE EXIGENCIES TO SET INTO MOTION...AND THEN I REST."

ALL MY SENSES FEEL HEIGHTENED. ANY OTHER TIME, I WOULD **RELISH** THIS FEELING.

MY VOICE IS RETURNING.

QUIET.



A FAMILIAR SMELL.

TUMA

I KNOW YOU ARE OUT THERE, MY FRIEND.

PLEASE...

...GO AWAY.



I AM HERE TO HELP.

COME NO CLOSER, OR I'LL BE FORCED TO KILL YOU. I CANNOT CONTROL THIS SPELL.

STEP ASIDE AND LET ME **FINISH** THIS. BRELAQ MUST BE **DESTROYED**.



TUMA, PLEASE!

STAY YOURSELF!



MY *BEAUTIFUL* WIFE. I HAVE LET YOU *DOWN*.

EVEN WITH ALL MY *POWERS*, ALL MY *MAGIC*, I COULD NOT PROTECT OUR SON.



MY BOY. MY POOR, SWEET, BOY.

WHAT HAVE I *DONE*?

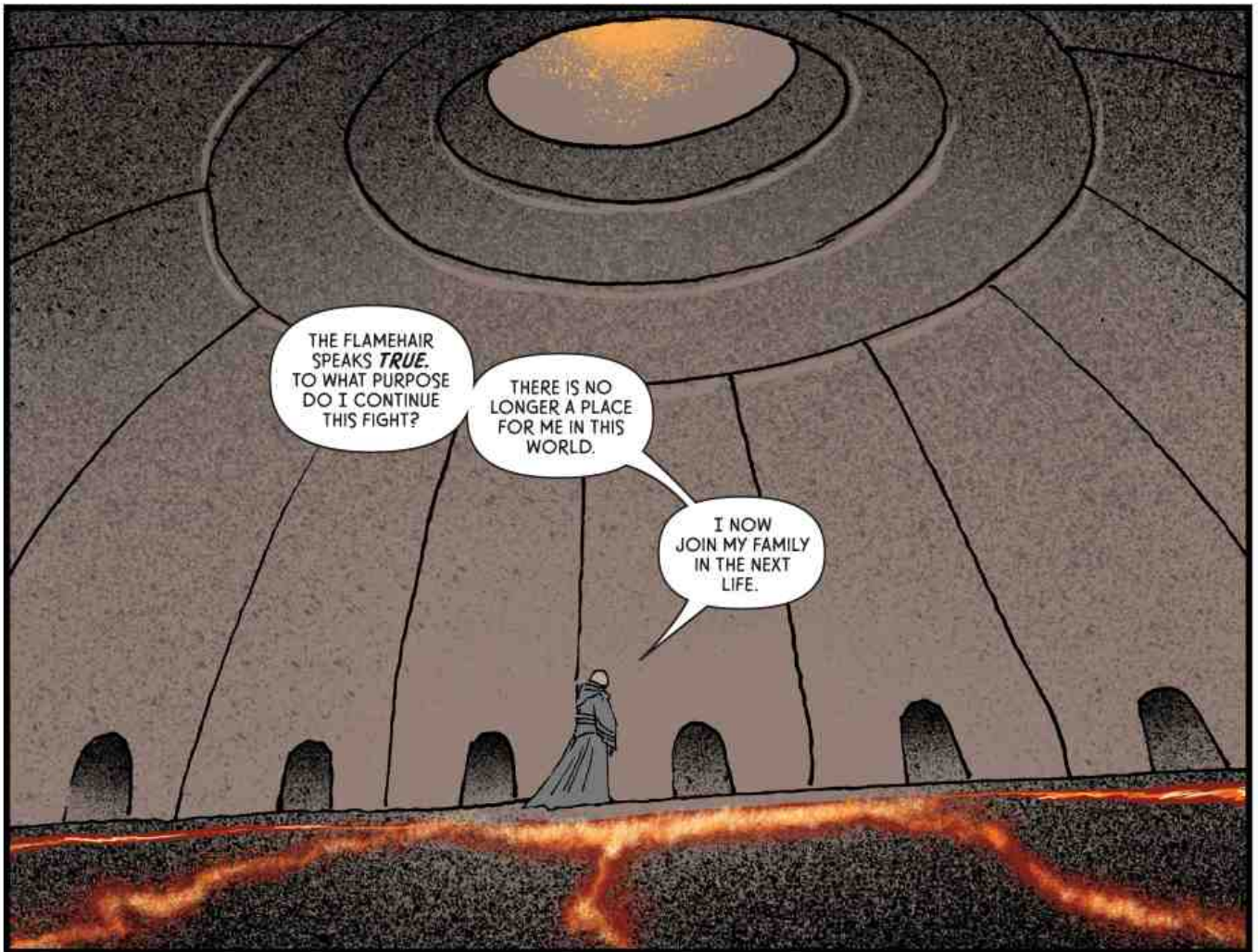


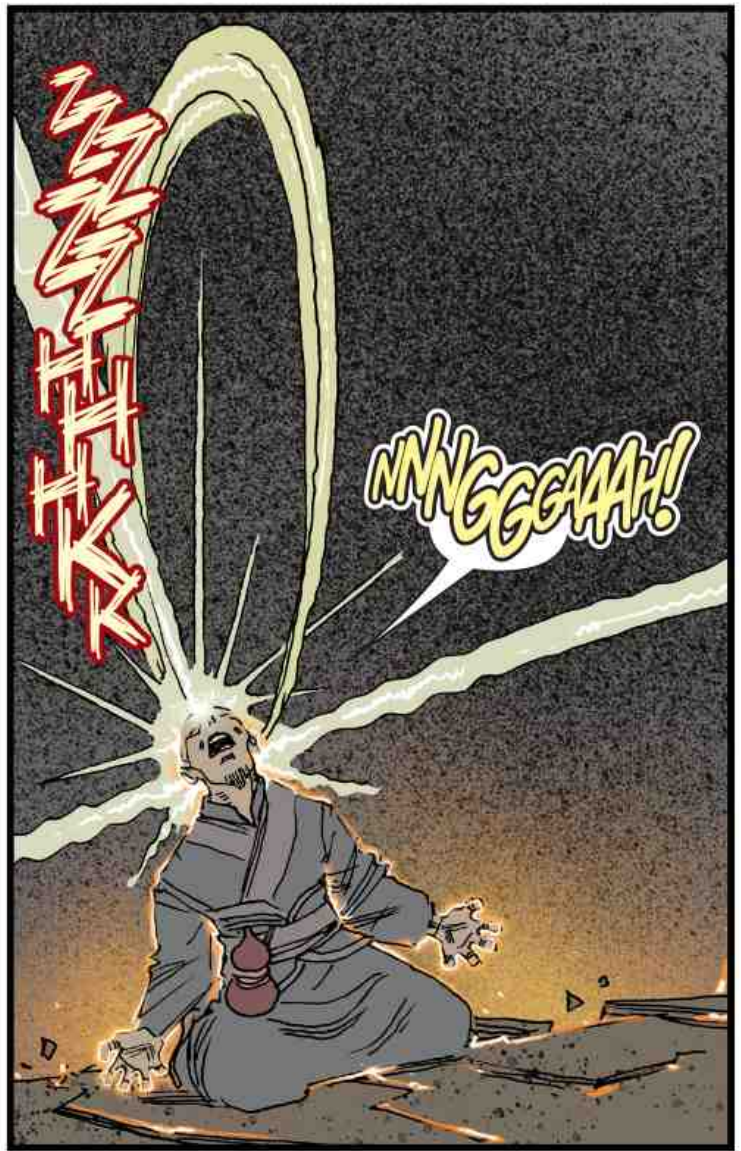
THIS IS ALL *TOO MUCH*. I SO DESIRE THIS PAIN TO *CEASE*.

MY *BELOVED*... KEEP OUR SON WELL IN THE REALM OF SOULS. I MISS YOU BOTH *SO MUCH*.



PERHAPS IT IS TIME FOR *ME* TO BE WITH YOU BOTH.









THE GODS
AND DEMONS
OF THE FIRE
BELOW--

--ARE **TAKING
ERKHARA!**

CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE...



NEXT ISSUE

Red Sonja is a woman possessed, and we DO mean possessed! Lucky for her, she's also a one-woman army, which is good, as she's about to face off against an army! The price on her head, the missing crown, the rage of a certain wizard-it all comes home to roost this issue!

AMANDA CONNER, JIMMY PALMIOTTI and MORITAT dish out the ultimate punishment where it's deserved, and there's plenty of punishment to go around!

STEPHEN MOONEY SWINGS THROUGH THE JUNGLE WITH SHEENA AND DIVES DEEP INTO THE NEW SERIES

Stephen, you're obviously a fan of pulp and genre. You're just coming off of our latest series starring Bettie Page and your indie title Half Past Danger fits the bill too. What's your take on the age-old "jungle action" genre?

I definitely tend to gravitate towards these more old school matinee serials; it's true. I think it stems from the sheer joy and memories this type of entertainment brought me as a kid and growing up. That's not to suggest for a minute that I feel that these properties are in anyway juvenile or simple; just that (when done well!) they hit a particular sweet spot that's hard to target elsewhere.

For Sheena specifically - I was a big Tarzan fan growing up and there're obviously some similar elements and crossover there. But Sheena provides very much her own flavour and spin on that traditional 'raised in the jungle' archetype. She has far more of an edge to her, to my mind. She's dangerous when crossed and quick to aggressive action. On the other hand though, she's all about loyalty and natural harmony - tons of interesting facets to explore there.

Sheena is low key an incredibly historic character in comics. She's as old as Superman, was created by the legendary Will Eisner, and was the first female character in the medium with her own eponymous title. What's it like adding your own touch to that legacy?

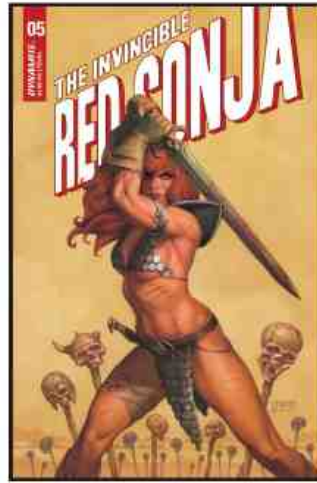
Ha - daunting! But also a great opportunity to pen another page in such an illustrious history. It's exciting getting to play with these kinds of toys and accepting that challenge of adding something new and worthy to the established mythos. The fact that she was a bit of a trailblazer is fantastic, but that in itself does not a good story make. It's up to us newbies to add something perhaps a little more contemporary, without robbing Sheena of any of the elements that already made her great.

As we said, you've been writing Bettie Page for a bit, who was no stranger to some jungle themed costuming or even big cat companions in her shoots. How do you think Sheena is similar and different to the Queen of the Pinups as a character?

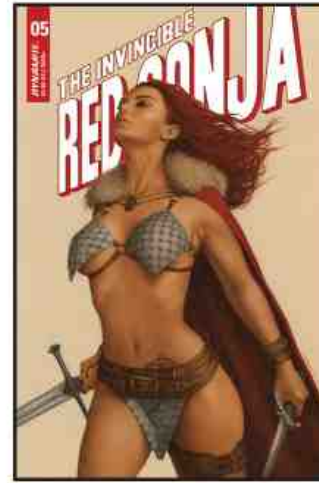
Oh man, they couldn't be more different! Which is definitely a good thing. I mean, on the face of it, they're both incredibly impressive, capable people, who excel in their own environments. Personality-wise though, there are major differences. Sheena is far more hardline, judgmental, and decisive, while still retaining that huge, brave heart and empathy for wildlife and the natural world. Bettie is all about natural charm and aptitude; able to turn her hand to numerous pursuits and excel due to her tremendous, ingrained aptitude. Bettie very much plays up to and exploits what the world thinks of her, while Sheena couldn't give less of a damn. Two diametrically opposed personality types, but two genuinely heroic and admirable characters. Both tremendous fun to write!



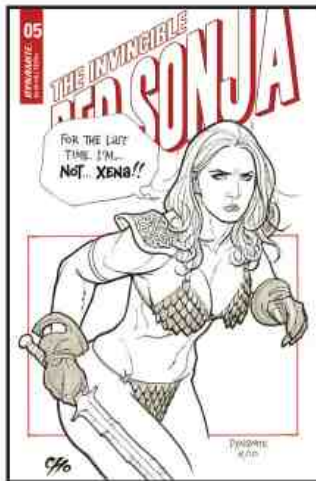
Cover A
art by AMANDA CONNER
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Cover B
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Cover C
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Cover D
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Cover E
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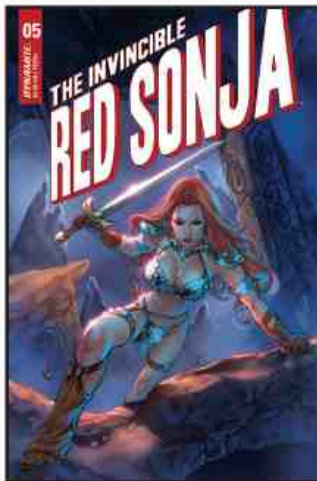
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